

STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION  
Post Office Box 082  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0082  
(609) 292-1892

STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION  
COMMISSION CASE NO. 48-16

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IN THE MATTER OF  
ANNE CORWELL,  
Director, Office of Grants Management  
New Jersey Department of Education

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Administrative Action  
CONSENT ORDER

WHEREAS, the State Ethics Commission ("Commission") is authorized to initiate, receive, investigate, review and hear complaints regarding violations of the New Jersey Conflicts of Interest Law, *N.J.S.A. 52:13D-12 et seq.* ("Conflicts Law"), applicable rules of the Commission, *N.J.A.C. 19:61-1.1 et seq.*, the Uniform Ethics Code, and any agency code of ethics, by any State officer or employee or special State officer or employee; and

WHEREAS, this matter was brought before the Commission by a complaint filed with the Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Commission investigated the matters and issues raised by the complaint; and

WHEREAS, the Commission and Anne Corwell ("Corwell") desire to enter into a final and complete resolution of all the matters and issues raised thereby;

IT IS THEREFORE agreed by the parties as follows:

1. Corwell has been employed by the New Jersey Department of Education ("NJDOE") since March 1995. She has been the Director, Office of Grants Management ("OGM") for NJDOE since 2002.

2. OGM, in collaboration with department program offices, is responsible for disseminating, primarily to school districts, federal and State funds for entitlement and discretionary grant programs. The available funds are allocated to support and enhance major educational initiatives throughout the State. Public school districts are required to set aside funds to pay for services that benefit non-public school students, including those in Catholic schools.

3. Corwell's husband, George Corwell ("Mr. Corwell"), is the Education Director for the New Jersey Catholic Conference. In this position, Mr. Corwell advocates on behalf of all Catholic schools in New Jersey, which includes working with the government program coordinators from the five dioceses in New Jersey as well as the local school districts in which the Catholic schools are located.

4. On March 13, 2012, Corwell submitted a memorandum to former NJDOE Ethics Liaison Officer David Corso ("ELO Corso") recusing herself from any involvement with non-public school issues at NJDOE.

5. Notwithstanding her recusal from all non-public school matters, Corwell was involved in meetings, email exchanges and discussions with NJDOE employees and others regarding non-public school issues. She also exchanged approximately fifty (50) emails with Mr. Corwell regarding non-public and Catholic school issues between May 2012 and August 2016.

6. It is the Commission's position that, consistent with Corwell's recusal memorandum, her Ethics Liaison Officer advised her that she must recuse from all matters involving non-public schools. It is also the Commission's position that Corwell violated sections 23(e)(3) and (e)(7) of the Conflicts Law and *N.J.A.C.* 19:61-7.4(d) by failing to recuse from matters involving non-public and Catholic schools and matters involving Mr. Corwell and/or the New Jersey Catholic Conference.

7. It is Corwell's position that she was advised by her Ethics Liaison Officer that her recusal obligation only prohibited her from making decisions regarding non-public schools, that she could discuss non-public grant applications so long as she did not make decisions regarding the applications, and that she complied with this restriction.

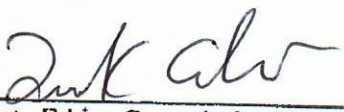
8. In hindsight, however, Corwell acknowledges that her involvement in meetings, email exchanges and discussions with NJDOE employees and others regarding non-public school issues, and her email exchanges with her husband regarding issues concerning non-public and Catholic schools, violated sections 23(e)(3) and (e)(7) of the Conflicts Law and N.J.A.C. 19:61-7.4(d).

9. In consideration of the above, Corwell agrees to pay a civil penalty in the amount of \$1,500.00, payable to Treasurer, State of New Jersey.

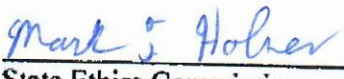
10. The parties agree to enter into this Consent Order in settlement of all matters and issues that are involved herein.

  
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Anne Corwell

Dated: 3/27/18

  
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State Ethics Commission  
By: Joseph P. LaSala, Chair  
Red MC Atam vice chair

Dated: 4/10/18

  
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State Ethics Commission  
By: Mark T. Holmes,  
Acting Executive Director

Dated: 4/10/18